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HOUSE BILL NO. 1560

Offered January 8, 2003

Prefiled December 20, 2002

A BILL to amend and reenact § 46.2-1231 of the Code of Virginia, relating to fees charged for towing, recovery, and storage of certain motor vehicles.

 Patron—Orrock

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 46.2-1231 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 46.2-1231. Ticketing, removal, or immobilization of trespassing vehicles by owner or operator of parking or other lot or building; charges.

The owner, operator, or lessee of any parking lot, parking area, or parking space in a parking lot or area or any part of a parking lot or area, or of any other lot or building, including any county, city, or town, or authorized agent of the person having control of such premises may have any vehicle occupying the lot, area, space, or building without the permission of its owner, operator, lessee, or authorized agent of the one having the control of the premises, removed by towing or otherwise to a licensed garage for storage until called for by the owner or his agent if there are posted at all entrances to the parking lot or area signs clearly and conspicuously disclosing that such vehicle, if parked without permission, will be removed, towed, or immobilized. The requirements of this section relating to the posting of signs by an owner, operator, or lessee of any parking lot, parking area or space shall not apply to localities in which the local governing body has adopted an ordinance pursuant to § 46.2-1232.

Whenever a trespassing vehicle is removed or towed as permitted by this section, notice of this action shall forthwith be given by the tow truck operator to the State Police or the local law-enforcement agency of the jurisdiction from which the vehicle was towed. It shall be unlawful to fail to report such tow as required by this section and violation of the reporting requirement of this section shall constitute a traffic infraction punishable by a fine of not more than \$100. Such failure to report shall limit the amount which may be charged for the storage and safekeeping of the towed vehicle to an amount no greater than that charged for one day of storage and safekeeping. If the vehicle is removed and stored, the vehicle owner may be charged and the vehicle may be held for a reasonable fee for the removal and storage.

All businesses engaged in towing vehicles without the consent of their owners shall prominently display (i) at their main place of business and (ii) at any other location where towed vehicles may be reclaimed a comprehensive list of all their fees for towing, recovery, and storage services, or the basis of such charges. *This requirement to display a list of fees may also be satisfied by providing, when the towed vehicle is reclaimed, a written list of such fees, either as part of a receipt or separately, to the person who reclaims the vehicle.* Charges in excess of those posted shall not be collectable from any motor vehicle owner whose vehicle is towed, recovered, or stored without his consent.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, if the owner or representative or agent of the owner of the trespassing vehicle is present and removes the trespassing vehicle from the premises before it is actually towed, the trespassing vehicle shall not be towed, but the owner or representative or agent of the owner of the trespassing vehicle shall be liable for a reasonable fee, not to exceed twenty-five dollars or such other limit as the governing body of the county, city, or town may set by ordinance, in lieu of towing.

In lieu of having a trespassing vehicle removed by towing or otherwise, the owner, operator, lessee or authorized agent of the premises on which the trespassing vehicle is parked may cause the vehicle to be immobilized by a boot or other device that prevents a vehicle from being moved by preventing a wheel from turning, provided that the boot or other device does not damage the vehicle or wheel. The charge for the removal of any boot or device shall not exceed twenty-five dollars or such other limit as the governing body of the county, city, or town may set by ordinance. In lieu of having the vehicle removed by towing or otherwise, or in lieu of causing the vehicle to be immobilized, the owner, operator, lessee or authorized agent of the premises on which the trespassing vehicle is parked may cause to have an authorized local government official or law-enforcement officer issue, on the premises, a notice of the violation of a parking ordinance or regulation created pursuant to § 46.2-1220 or § 46.2-1221 to the registered owner of the vehicle.

This section shall not apply to police, fire, or public health vehicles or where a vehicle, because of a wreck or other emergency, is parked or left temporarily on the property of another. The governing body

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59 of every county, city, and town may by ordinance set limits on fees and charges provided for in this
60 section.